

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NE USE  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Koester Block Historic District  
AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Between 9th & 10th, Elm and Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Marysville

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Kansas

VICINITY OF  
CODE

No. 2, Jim Jeffries

COUNTY

Marshall

CODE

117

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT  
☐ BUILDING(S)  
☐ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC  
☐ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH  
PUBLIC ACQUISITION  
☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED  
☐ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS  
ACCESSIBLE  
☒ YES: RESTRICTED  
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☒ MUSEUM  
☒ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK  
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

City of Marysville

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall

CITY, TOWN

Marysville

VICINITY OF

Kansas

STATE

66508

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Marshall County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Marysville

STATE

Kansas 66508

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

"NONE"

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

117-3560-009

Koester Block Historic District

Marshall County

Post Office Block Building (109 S. 9<sup>th</sup> St.) (C); Koester Building (908 Elm) (C);  
Old Montgomery Ward Store (901 Broadway)(C); Charles J.D. Koester (919 Broadway) (C)

# DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

## CHECK ONE

## CHECK ONE

☐ EXCELLENT

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ UNALTERED

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☒ GOOD

☐ RUINS

☒ ALTERED

☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

☐ FAIR

☐ UNEXPOSED

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Koester Block is a set of commercial and residential buildings occupying the block bounded by 10th and 9th, Elm and Broadway streets in Marysville. Three commercial buildings occupy the northwest quarter of the Koester Block; the Charles F. Koester home, a property listed on the National Register individually, takes up the northeast corner; the Charles J. D. Koester house is located in the southeast. The southwest quarter of the block is an open park.

The Post Office Block is directly west of the Charles F. Koester house. It is located approximately in the center of the Broadway side of the block. The Post Office Block is a two-story brick building 44 feet wide and 50 feet long, designed in the "commercial palace" style. A ground level entrance to the second story separates two storefronts, and seven arched bays run along the entire length of the facade.

The original four-over-four windows of the second story and the brackets of the cornice repeat the spacing of the first floor bays. In this facade stone is used to accent the keystones and supports for the arches. Column bases and window sills are also stone.

On the east there are three oriel windows projecting from the second story. These are framed in wood. The rear wall is articulated by a regular pattern of fenestration. Window and door openings have simple brick arches.

The roof of the Post Office Block slopes slightly from front to rear. A brick parapet wall is notched in two places so that the run-off collected can be drained to a single downspout on the east. A brick chimney flue has been added to the rear wall.

## Alterations

A pressed sheet metal sign identifying the Post Office Block and its date of construction was removed from the top of the building facade in the late nineteenth century. Both chimney tops in the side walls have been rebuilt. Within the original masonry openings of the first floor storefronts, modern metal frames enclosing larger sheets of plate glass have been installed. The north masonry wall has been repointed to a height of about four feet. On the east wall the second story oriel windows are not original.

The Koester Building abutting the Post Office Block to the west is a three-story brick structure 44 feet wide and 80 feet long. Like the Post Office Block, it has two store fronts separated by a central ground entrance to the upper floors.

Cast iron columns, rather than masonry arches, subdivide the fronts. Stone quoins and ornamental cornice define the main story. There is a stone belt course separating the second and third floors. Arches and sills are also made of stone. There is a bracketed metal cornice at the top of the facade. Just below the cornice and centered between raised panels in a stone medallion carved with the words "Masonic Hall" and the date of construction "1880."

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There are three chimneys in each side wall of the Koester Building. At the second story level on the east side next to the rear of the Post Office Block, there is a door and an entry porch reached by a metal stair. At the third story level there is a wooden stair from the roof of the Post Office Block to the roof of the Koester Building.

In the rear of the Koester Building, there are two ground floor doors flanked by windows. Openings have simple brick arches. A fire escape and gutters which drain the roof are attached to the wall.

Alterations

The Koester Building has only one original chimney top remaining. Larger sheets of glass have also been installed in the storefront windows. A modern sign on carrerra glass has been added to fill in the upper light in the east store front.

The old Montgomery Ward store abutting the Koester Building to the west contrasts in style with its two nineteenth century neighborhoods. The store is a two-story brick building with basement. It is 44 feet wide and 105 feet long. Buff-colored face brick were used on the north and west sides; the east and south walls are made of common red brick.

A vaguely Spanish motif is expressed in the front facade. At the second story level, four raised brick columns capped with decorative urns define three wall panels. In each panel there is a dark terra cotta sun-symbol surmounting a row of metal-framed windows. The arched parapet wall is trimmed in light-colored terra cotta. Below the windows there is a continuous course of terra cotta. A second belt course defines the border of the first floor windows. These two courses are continued in raised brick on the west wall of the building. Windows are regularly spaced at the second-story level, however, there are only three small windows in the first story on the west side.

The storefront of the old Montgomery Ward building has been altered extensively.

In the rear of the building, an elevator tower is located in the southwest corner, and there is a chimney in the south wall. At ground level a sliding door opens from the elevator shaft. Another loading door is centrally located.

Alterations

Of the store buildings on the Koester Block, the old Montgomery Ward store has been most changed. Recently, the first floor of the facade was rebuilt up to the terra cotta belt course. In the rear wall almost all the double-hung windows have been removed and the openings closed by painted wooden panels. Inside,

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the main floor and mezzanine have also been remodeled.

As the Koester Block developed, a line of storage and service buildings was built along the alley behind the store buildings. Only one of these remains. This is a two-story brick stable associated with the Charles F. Koester house.

The Charles J. D. Koester house is a one-and-one-half story buff-colored brick building with a rough-pitched stone foundation and shingled frame gables. It is 42 feet wide and 55 feet long. The wood shingle roof is basically a truncated hip with gables on the east, south and west. There is a dormer on the north and another beside the south gable. A tall brick chimney is located on the northeast.

Each gable in the roof is aligned above a bay on the first floor. Each gable end contains an arched recess with curved edges. Within these recesses are set windows.

A porch with a circular, conical-roofed pavillion wraps around the front and southeast corner of the house. It is supported on paired columns. The pediment over the porch entrance is echoed by the triangular roof dormers. The front door of the house is ornamented by sidelights with raised fleur-de-lis designs. There is also a screened porch attached to the rear of the house. East of this porch is an outside entrance to the basement.

The architectural style of the C.J.D. Koester house is eclectic, but at the time of its construction it was probably considered to have been what was then interpreted quite freely to be "colonial." The surface treatment of the gable ends suggests the shingle style, but the ornamental detailing is classical. The combination of brick and stone with a varied roofline is reminiscent of the Queen Ann style which was generally out of fashion by this time.

The C.J.D. Koester house has been virtually unaltered since the period of its construction. It is surrounded by a landscaped yard which is enclosed on the street sides by an ornamental brick wall.

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Four years after his marriage, in 1880, Koester built Marysville's first three-story brick building next to the Post Office Block. The prominence of this new addition to the central business district must have been a visual reminder of Koester's prominence as a businessman and community leader. He was elected mayor of Marysville again in 1882 and served several subsequent terms in the 1880's.

One of the two store rooms on the ground floor of the new building was occupied by E. L. Miller's drug store. There were offices for physicians and lawyers on the second floor, and a large meeting hall with anterooms on the third. The top floor was designed to accomodate the activities of Masons, Odd Fellows, and other fraternal organizations. At the time one writer commented, "the hall is one of the finest in the state," and mentioned that other substantial business structures occupied the west half of an entire square of ground owned by Mr. Koester in the heart of the city.

The two twentieth-century buildings on the Koester block are associated with the next generation of Koesters. Charles F. Koester died in 1903. His son, Charles J. D. Koester, finished building a new home for himself and his bride in 1904. This is located south of the old Koester house; the C.J.D. Koester house faces Elm Street.

In 1929 the Koester estate administered by Charles J. D. Koester built another commercial building next to the two earlier ones. This two story structure, designed in the then popular Spanish/Mission mode, was leased to the Montgomery Ward company for its retail store designated "Number 1" in a national chain. When plans for the store were announced, the Marshall County News commended Charles Koester for "aiding the business growth of the city." Walter Boschen of St. Joseph, Missouri was the architect for the project and Andy Hahn of Marysville was the contractor. Montgomery Ward leased the building until 1969, when the company ended direct retailing in small towns.

For ten years then, the building was occupied by Gibson's Discount Store. Recently, the building has been remodeled; the Ben Franklin company now rents the building for a variety store. Since 1977 the entire Koester Block has belonged to the city of Marysville. The old Koester house was first donated by the Koester family to the city for a museum in 1972. The house was listed on the National Register in 1975. The city council accepted the other buildings from the Koester family in December, 1977. A volunteer committee was appointed to oversee the management and maintenance of the block.

A block of properties evidencing both the private and public lives of a single family over several generations is rare in Kansas. When Schmidt had the Post Office Block constructed in 1870, it was a relatively fashionable and substantial building for the small community of Marysville. Charles Koester's home was equally fashionable and over the years it became something of a showplace denoting the status of a successful businessman and community leader. When the Koester Block was built in 1880, the growing town of Marysville could utilize a larger "commercial palace."



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C.J.D. Koester's house demonstrates the continuing prominence of the family in the early twentieth century as well as a taste for architectural fashion. But the larger community had reached an economic plateau. The county had been settled and developed; the population and economic demand remained nearly constant. There was no need for new buildings until after the major changes of twentieth century modernization.

Unlike the two earlier commercial buildings, the old Montgomery Ward store evidences a change in retailing as well as a response to growth. The building was designed to house only one store and its particular departments. It was a change away from the "palace" to another design. The opening meant a new departure for the Montgomery Ward company which had succeeded as a mail order business. It is revealing that, after forty years, the company closed the operation and reemphasized its original mode of marketing. Historical associations with buildings of the Koester Block yield a remarkable outline of change in Marysville with perhaps some implications of national development.

Bibliography

Atchison Champion. 9-13-1881.

Grass & Grain. Manhattan, Kansas. 5-9-1978

Marysville Herald 7-31-1881.

Marysville Locomotive 11-5-1870.

Marshall County News 2-1-1929, 8-30-1929.

Marshall County Handbook c. 1885.

Book No. 1, Register of Deeds, Marshall County.

# SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
100-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
100-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
100-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
100-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
100-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Since 1859 the square of land bounded by 9th and 10th, Elm and Broadway Streets in Marysville, Kansas has been associated with the Koester family. The block is occupied by three commercial buildings and two houses. Over the years 1870-1929, each commercial building venture stimulated local business and contributed to the continuing prosperity of the Koesters which in turn was expressed in the residences. Together the buildings and the houses form a historic district indicative of the evolution of Marysville specifically, and American culture generally.

### Chronology

By the end of 1859, Mrs. Ludoweine Koester had acquired all the lots in Block 10, Marysville. Her son Charles and daughter, Mrs. Jane Schmidt, eventually inherited the land.

Jane's husband, Frank, built the two-story Post Office Block in 1870 with W. E. Crothers serving as the architect-contractor. The building seems to have been finished by November, for the Marysville Locomotive noted on November 5, 1870, that Mr. Campbell had moved his store and the post office to a new building on the south side of Broadway. The new block was designed in the "commercial palace" style with Italianate detailing.

Campbell's store sold clothing and dry goods. The Wells Fargo Agency, managed by L. W. Libby, later moved into the other half of the ground floor. Over the Post Office was a dentist's office, and the local Masons also had a meeting room on the second floor of the new building.

While the Post Office Block was being built, Charles Koester was beginning the first of two terms as county treasurer. Previously, he had served as register of deeds for eight years. In 1873 he built a house northwest of the Post Office Block. In 1874 he declined a nomination for state treasurer to devote full attention to his banking and real estate partnership with Frank Schmidt. By this time Koester had acquired title to the Post Office Block. In 1876, after Charles Koester married Sylvia Broughton, a Marysville schoolteacher, a major addition was built onto the north side of the house, in effect making it the front. The Koesters traveled to the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition for their honeymoon; Koester was a member of the Kansas Commission to the Exposition. He was then a town councilman in 1877, and served as mayor in 1878.

THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO FUTURE AMENDMENT.

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## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Behind the Gate of Lions," Midway Magazine, Topeka Capital Journal, Oct. 21, 1973.

Blackmar, Frank, editor, Kansas, A Cyclopedia of State History (Chicago, Standard Pub. Co., 1912), v. 3, pp. 508, 509.

"A Handsome Home," Illustrated Edition of Marysville and Marshall County, issued as a supplement to the Marysville True Republican in July, 1890.

History of Kansas (Chicago, A. T. Andreas, 1883), pp. 916-920.

"Hon. Chas. F. Koester," Marysville Republican, Aug. 21, 1902.

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds	LONGITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds		LATITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds	LONGITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		39 50 29	96 38 44	
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: one

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Richard Pankratz, Director, Historic Sites Survey		
ORGANIZATION Kansas State Historical Society	DATE Feb. 17, 1975	
STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West 10th		
CITY OR TOWN: Topeka	STATE Kansas 66612	CODE 20

## 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

Name

Nyle H. Miller  
Nyle H. Miller

Title Executive DirectorDate Feb. 18, 1975

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See attached sheet)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.5

QUADRANGLE NAME Marysville

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 701382 4412620

B 14 701482 4412525

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 14 701382 4412620

D 14 701482 4412620

E 14 701382 4412620

F 14 701482 4412620

G 14 701382 4412620

H 14 701482 4412620

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Block 10, City of Marysville

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Julie Wortman, Historian Architect, and Dale Nimz

ORGANIZATION

Historic Preservation Department

DATE

Ks. State Historical Society

10-1-80

STREET & NUMBER

120 West 10th

TELEPHONE

(913) 296-3251

CITY OR TOWN

Topeka

STATE

Kansas

66612

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE     

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Joseph W. Shell*

TITLE

Executive Director, Ks. State Historical Society

DATE

10-14-80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE
Kansas
COUNTY:
Marshall
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME					
COMMON:					
Koester House Museum					
AND/OR HISTORIC:					
Koester, Charles, House (preferred name)					
2. LOCATION					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
919 Broadway					
CITY OR TOWN:			CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:		
Marysville			No. 2, Martha Keys		
STATE		CODE	COUNTY:		CODE
Kansas 66508		20	Marshall		117
3. CLASSIFICATION					
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment		<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum		<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY					
OWNER'S NAME:					
City of Marysville					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
City Hall					
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:		CODE
Marysville			Kansas 66508		20
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION					
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:					
Register of Deeds					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
Marshall County Courthouse					
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE		CODE
Marysville			Kansas 66508		20
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS					
TITLE OF SURVEY:					
Historic Sites Survey					
DATE OF SURVEY: 1969 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local					
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:					
Kansas State Historical Society					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
120 West 10th					
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:		CODE
Topeka			Kansas 66612		20

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE

Kansas

COUNTY:

Marshall

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Koester house is a square-shaped, two story frame structure with white lap siding. Facing north, it is located just east of the town's main commercial district. It has a spacious yard with many plantings, fountains and urns. The entire property is surrounded by a five-foot high brick wall on three sides and a redwood fence on the south. The house sits on a simple stone base approximately two feet high.

The roof, which basically consists of two intersecting gable roofs, is of wood shingles painted green. There are three intersecting gables on the north and one on the east. Three red brick chimneys break the roof line. The roof is separated from the walls by a plain simple cornice.

Originally the north side was only one bay, or one gable, wide. It ended just east of the present entrance. About two years after the original construction the addition was made. Window headers were matched on the second floor, but the later windows were not the same type, being wide rectangular windows. The two west gables are considerably steeper in pitch than the original one. The front now has a rather asymmetrical appearance since the new main entrance was not centered under the gable or the second floor window. The porch was originally only on the east side but it was extended around the new north front and some of the trim was changed. The porch is now supported by large square columns and has a railing around it. A decorative treatment similar to some of the original ornamentation is located between the columns below the plain porch cornice.

The windows are all slender rectangles trimmed in wood. Those in the second floor gables have deep wooden heads which are flat with pediments in the center matching the gable roof line. The pediments are topped with decorative finials. First floor windows of the original part of the house have the same treatment. A large bay window is located on the first floor, just west of the main entry. Windows on the original part of the house are narrow, round-arched and paired under a decorative lintel. Shutters have been placed on all second floor windows. The only major change to the exterior after the 1870's was the second floor sleeping porch added to the east side in the early 1920's. The brick wall surrounding the property was not original but was constructed some time between 1881 and 1890. Two entrances to the grounds are guarded by cast iron statues of animals, two lions at the north or main entrance and two hunting dogs at the east, the former carriage entrance.

Since being donated to the city of Marysville for museum use, the house has been returned to the Victorian era in the interior. All furniture in the house was used by the Koester family. The exterior of the house looks much like it did in the late 1870's.

Located to the southwest of the house and connected to it by a long covered walkway or portico is an irregularly shaped rectangular white frame structure which has a summer kitchen at the east end, a storage room or tool house in the middle and on the west an ice house with walls five inches thick. North of the ice house and at the western limits of the grounds is a brick carriage house with an arched entry on the south and another entry from the alley on the west.

The gardens no longer have the plantings and appearance which elicited such admiration at the turn of the century but are still quite impressive.

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☐ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal☐ Education☒ Political☐ Urban Planning☐ Prehistoric☐ Engineering☐ Religion/Phi-☒ Other (Specify)☐ Historic☐ Industry☐ PhilosophyWestern Settlement☐ Agriculture☐ Invention☐ Science☐ Architecture☒ Landscape☐ Sculpture☐ Art☐ Architecture☐ Social/Human-☒ Commerce☐ Literature☐ itarian☐ Communications☐ Military☐ Theater☐ Conservation☐ Music☐ Transportation

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Charles F. Koester house was built for the Marysville banker in 1873. At that time Koester was also serving as the Marshall county treasurer, and the Marshall County News (Marysville) announced on April 19, 1873, "County Treasurer Charles F. Koester is making arrangements to erect a dwelling house on his elegant block of lots on Broadway. It will be one of the neatest residences in the city." On May 10 the same paper reported construction had begun, the cellar was being excavated, and the stone for the foundation was being delivered. A month later notice was taken that the house was being finished and that the contractor was C. S. Geer, a highly regarded local carpenter.

In October the house and landscaping were well along toward completion and the following appeared in the News of October 4, 1873: "Charlie Koester is superintending the erection of a unique and tasteful mound in front of the west portico of his new residence. Let others follow his example in ornamenting their grounds, and surrounding their homes with all that is beautiful and ornamental. Charlie has only one more addition to make in the way of improving his home, and that is so self-evident that we could not particularize." Since Koester was one of the community's most eligible bachelors, the "one more addition" is presumed to be an editorial ribbing of Koester's marital status.

Born in Hesse-Cassel, Germany, in 1841, Charles Koester came with his family to the United States in 1850. The family is variously reported to have first settled in Chicago or Cincinnati. By the mid-1850's the Koesters were in Keokuk, Iowa, and by 1859 in St. Joseph, Missouri. Charles Koester is known to have been in Marysville by 1860, and some reports date his arrival in late 1859.

From the very beginning of his business career in Marysville Charles Koester was associated with his brother-in-law Frank Schmidt. Schmidt, who was ten years older than Koester, was the organizer of their business ventures. At first they engaged in an extensive mercantile business, but in 1870 they established the Exchange Bank of Schmidt and Koester, which became the town's leading financial institution. Koester was cashier and later the president of the bank.

Koester was also very active in local political affairs; he served four two-year terms as county register of deeds and then two terms as county treasurer. In 1872 he was appointed to a three-member state commission to revise the tax laws of Kansas. In 1876, the same year that he was married to Sylvia Broughton, a Marysville school teacher, he was a member of the Kansas Commission to the Centennial Exposition at

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Kansas	
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(Number all entries)

8.

Philadelphia. The Koesters traveled to the exposition on their honeymoon. He was a town councilman in 1877 and served as mayor in 1878 and again as mayor for several terms in the 1880's.

A major addition was built on to the north side of the house, in effect making it the front of the house; this was probably done in 1876 after his marriage. The landscaping of the large grounds continued to be developed and expanded. A Topeka newspaper, the Mail and Breeze, in 1899 ran a feature on the Koester house, entitling it "The Most Beautiful House in Kansas." The article admitted that there were finer residences in the state but claimed that no private individual had spent as much money improving the grounds as had Charles Koester. It was estimated that he had expended as much as \$75,000 on the house and grounds. The lots on which the house sat were carefully laid out with walks, flowers, trees, shrubbery and fountains. In charge of the grounds was H. Schmalzl, a native of Germany and a local botanist and florist. Schmalzl had reportedly studied at the Royal Provincial school in Weikenstephan (spelling unverified), Germany, and had worked in the Royal Provincial gardens at Munich and Berlin.

Charles Koester lived in the house until his death in 1902. (His wife had died in 1883, leaving him with three young children to raise.) His younger daughter Jennie Lee had married Arthur J. Scott, and her family then made the Koester house their home. Mrs. Scott resided there until her death in 1968, having lived her entire life in the house her father built. The house was then unoccupied until the heirs donated it to the city of Marysville in November, 1972, exclusively for museum usage. After completion of the restoration and renovation work, the house was opened to the public in 1973.

Charles Koester was one of the most influential men in Marysville in commerce and politics for more than 30 years. His house with its magnificently landscaped grounds was a landmark in north central Kansas.

10.

- "Koester House Museum" (Marysville, n. p., 1973), 8 pp.  
Marshall County News (Marysville), April 19, May 10, June 7, Oct. 4, 1873; Sept. 20, 1879.  
Marysville Advocate, Nov. 16, 1972; Feb. 1, Oct. 4, Nov. 29, 1973; Sept. 26, 1974.  
"The Most Beautiful Home in Kansas," Topeka Mail and Breeze, Sept. 15, 1899.  
Portrait and Biographical Album of Marshall County (Chicago, Chapman Bros., 1889), p. 429.  
Root, Frank, and William E. Connelley, The Overland Stage to California (Topeka, pub. by authors, 1901), pp. 532-536.  
"A Roster of Kansas for Fifty Years," Kansas Historical Collections, v. 8 (1904), pp. 522, 531.

Preliminary nomination form prepared by Mrs. Sylvester Schmidt, Box 126, Marysville, Kansas

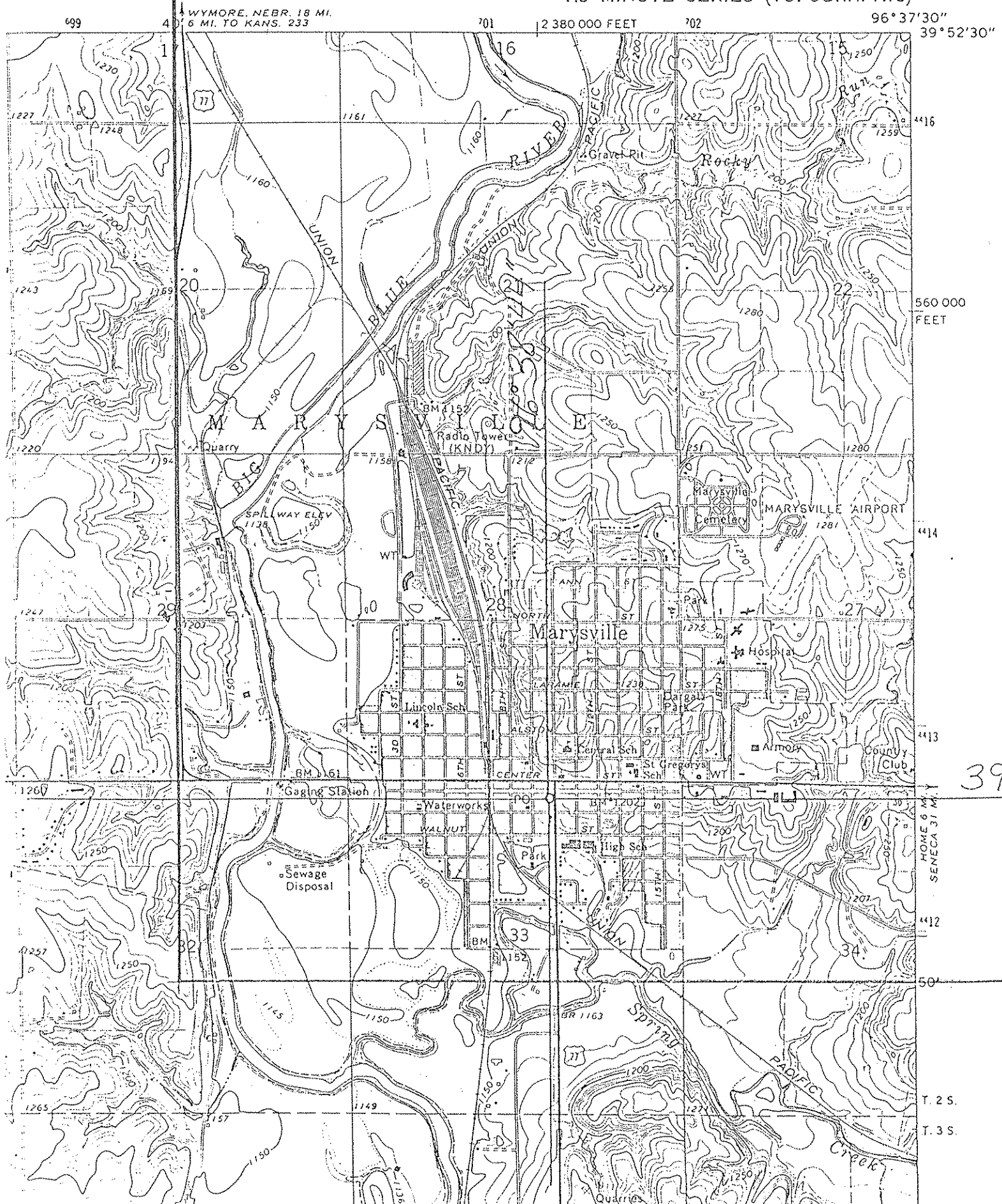


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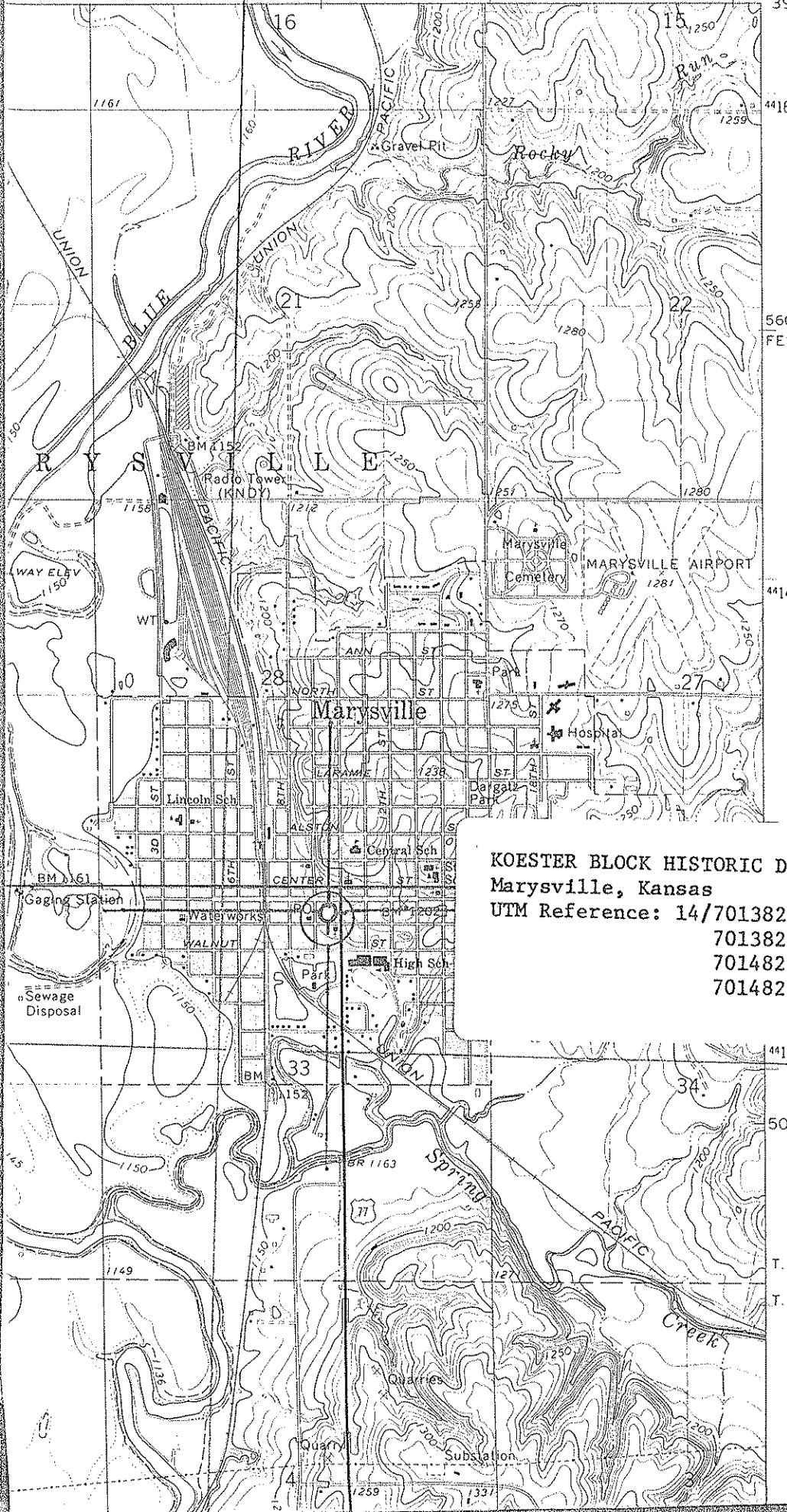
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KOESTER BLOCK HISTORIC DISTRICT

Marysville, Kansas

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